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New trends in migration: demographic aspects

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to decision 2011/101 of the Commission on Population and Development, in which the Commission decided that the special theme for its forty-sixth session in 2013 would be "New trends in migration: demographic aspects". The report presents an overview of trends in both international and internal migration, examining demographic aspects and discussing policies to enhance the contribution of migration to development and to address the challenges posed by population mobility. The report also presents recommendations for actions to promote the integration of migrants and to enhance the benefits of migration. When implemented, the recommendations could contribute to achieving the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development with regard to migration.

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I. Introduction

1. The past 20 years have seen major changes in the size, direction and complexity of migration both within and between countries. Driven primarily by economic and demographic disparities, population mobility has continued to increase. The global stock of international migrants is estimated to have increased from 155 million in 1990 to 214 million in 2010.[1] The number of internal migrants is even larger, as most people move within their countries rather than across national borders.[2]

2. Migration is associated with the search for better educational and job opportunities; the pursuit of individual aspirations; the flight from poverty, political instability, conflict or human rights abuse; and displacement due to natural or man-made disasters and environmental degradation. Recent changes in the size, direction and intensity of migration flows have been influenced by a wide range of economic, demographic, social, political and environmental factors. In Europe, for example, changes of membership within the European Union, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and population ageing have all been powerful forces generating migratory flows in recent decades, although the demand for migrant labour has been dampened by the economic crisis of recent years.

3. Job opportunities and access to services have continued to draw rural migrants into cities, while increases in agricultural productivity have lessened the demand for rural labour. In the emerging economies of Asia, for example, rural-urban migration has been stimulated by increased trade and investment, the expansion of manufacturing and the creation of jobs.

4. If appropriate policies are in place, migration can have positive effects in both places of origin and places of destination. In receiving areas, migrant labour can enhance the productive capacity of the economy; in sending areas, migration can alleviate the pressures of underemployment and, through remittances, contribute to economic growth and human development.

5. Many people move to seek relief from oppression, conflict or persecution. At the end of 2011, an estimated 42.5 million people worldwide were living in a place to which they had been forcibly displaced, including refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons.

6. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development states that migrations are an important part of the economic transformations occurring around the world and that they present serious new challenges. Therefore, these issues must be addressed with more emphasis within population and development policies.[3] A recent report of the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, entitled "Realizing the future we want for all", identifies migration as an important

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[1] United Nations, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision Database.

[2] Martin Bell and Elin Charles-Edwards, "Cross-national comparisons of internal migration: an update of global patterns and trends", Technical Paper (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, forthcoming).

[3] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 1.10.

demographic trend that will affect the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

7. Despite their important role in development, internal and international migration have proved difficult to analyse owing to a lack of timely, reliable and accessible migration data for many parts of the world. Despite this limitation, some major trends are apparent. Recent decades have seen an increase in migration from developing to developed regions. At the same time, new poles of economic growth are emerging in the global South and are expected to stimulate new migratory flows.

II. International migration: levels, trends and demographic impacts

A. Levels and trends of international migration

8. The number of international migrants has grown from an estimated 155 million in 1990 to 214 million in 2010. Although this represents an increase in the number of migrants, the percentage of international migrants compared to the global population has changed only slightly in the 20-year period, from 2.9 per cent in 1990 to 3.1 per cent in 2010.

9. Since 1990, migration patterns have become increasingly diverse, and most countries are now concurrently countries of origin, destination and transit. In 2010, of the 43 countries hosting at least 1 million immigrants, 24 were the place of origin for more than 1 million emigrants. Countries that experienced large gains in migrant stock between 1990 and 2010, such as Malaysia, Nigeria and Thailand, also experienced a large increase in the number of their citizens living abroad.

10. While almost all countries experienced an increase in their resident populations of international migrants, growth was more rapid in developed regions, with Europe and North America each adding more international migrants than the other four major areas combined (see table 1). As a result, in 2000 Europe surpassed Asia as the area hosting the largest number of international migrants.

11. The gap between major areas in the stock of international migrants as a fraction of total population has continued to widen. Large increases in migrant numbers coupled with moderate population growth during the same period have resulted in an increased share of international migrants in the populations of Europe, North America and Oceania. By contrast, in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, the overall population grew at a faster pace than the resident stock of migrants, reducing the share of foreign-born persons between 1990 and 2010.

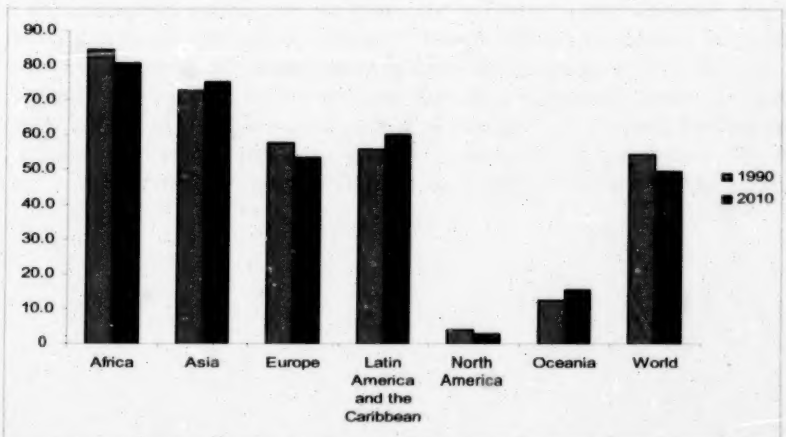
Table 1
Number of international migrants and share of total population, by development group or major area of residence, 1990 and 2010

	International migrants			*International migrants as a percentage of the total population*	
Development group or major area	*1990 (millions)*	*2010 (millions)*	*Percentage change 1990-2010*	*1990*	*2010*
World	155.2	214.2	38.0	2.9	3.1
Developed regions	82.0	127.8	55.7	7.2	10.3
Developing regions	73.2	86.4	18.1	1.8	1.5
Africa	16.0	19.3	20.6	2.5	1.9
Asia	50.9	61.3	20.5	1.6	1.5
Europe	49.1	69.9	42.3	6.8	9.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	7.1	7.7	8.2	1.6	1.3
North America	27.8	50.0	80.2	9.8	14.2
Oceania	4.4	6.0	37.8	16.2	16.8

Source: Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision Database.

12. International migrants are moving over greater distances than in the past. The percentage of migrants originating from a neighbouring country has fallen globally, from 46 per cent in 1990 to 37 per cent in 2010. Increasingly, people move across major areas rather than within major areas. However, in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, a majority of resident migrants continue to originate from within the same region (see figure I).

Figure I
Percentage of international migrants from the same major area, by place of residence, 1990 and 2010



Source: United Nations, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin* (forthcoming).

13. Despite the increased diversification of migratory flows, international migration remains highly concentrated: in 2010, of the 214 million international migrants worldwide, 50 million (almost one in four) were living in North America and 70 million (one in three), in Europe. Furthermore, in 2010, the 10 largest destination countries continued to account for slightly more than half of the global migrant stock. Yet over the past two decades, several new countries have emerged as important destinations. Many of the rapidly growing economies in East and South-East Asia, South America and West Africa have become poles for migration within their respective regions. In addition, the oil-producing countries of Western Asia and some countries of Southern Europe (including Greece, Italy and Spain) experienced a rapid growth in the number of international migrants between 1990 and 2010.

14. Since the onset of the financial crisis in 2008, some of these trends have slowed or even reversed at least temporarily. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the overall permanent international migration into OECD countries declined in 2010. More recent national data, however, indicate that migration into those countries rose again in 2011, with the exception of Italy, Spain and Sweden. With regard to Spain, migration from Latin America declined considerably between 2005 and 2010, resulting in the redirection of some Latin American migration to other OECD destination countries.[4] In addition, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain have recently experienced a modest increase in emigration.[5]

15. The origin of international migrants has become increasingly diversified over the past 20 years, with such countries as China, Mexico and the Philippines emerging as increasingly important places of origin. The number of migrants from China living in Africa, Europe, North America and Oceania more than tripled between 1990 and 2010, while the number of persons from Mexico or the Philippines living outside their country of birth doubled in the same period. By 2010, Mexicans formed the largest group of international migrants (see table 2).

Table 2
Top 10 countries/areas of origin for international migrants, 1990 and 2010

Rank	*Country/area*	*Migrant stock (millions)*	*Cumulative percentage of migrants*
1990			
1	Russian Federation	12.7	8.2
2	Afghanistan	7.5	13.0
3	India	6.9	17.5
4	Bangladesh	5.7	21.2
5	Ukraine	5.7	24.8
6	Mexico	5.0	28.1
7	China	4.3	30.8

[4] Organization of American States, *International Migration in the Americas: Second Report of the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas* (Washington, D.C., 2012).

[5] OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2012* (2012).

Rank	*Country/area*	*Migrant stock (millions)*	*Cumulative percentage of migrants*
8	United Kingdom	4.0	33.4
9	Italy	3.7	35.7
10	Pakistan	3.6	38.1
2010			
1	Mexico	12.4	5.8
2	India	11.4	11.1
3	Russian Federation	10.7	16.1
4	China	8.4	20.1
5	Bangladesh	6.5	23.1
6	Ukraine	6.4	26.1
7	Palestine	5.5	28.7
8	Pakistan	5.0	31.0
9	Afghanistan	4.8	33.3
10	Philippines	4.7	35.5

B. Refugees and asylum seekers

16. At the end of 2011, the global number of refugees and asylum seekers reached an estimated 15.2 million persons. More than 800,000 people were newly displaced in 2011, the highest number in more than a decade; post-election violence in Côte d'Ivoire, the Arab Spring uprisings and the deteriorating situation in Somalia were all contributing factors, especially in the first half of the year.[6] After almost two years of unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported 612,000 Syrian refugees as at January 2013, including people who either had been formally registered in neighbouring countries as refugees or were being assisted as such.[7] Several countries hosting large numbers of refugees experienced a significant decrease, including Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

17. Developing countries hosted four fifths of the world's refugees. The 48 least developed countries hosted an estimated 2.3 million refugees. By the end of 2011, according to UNHCR global estimates, there were close to 2.7 million Afghan refugees. Iraq was the second largest country of origin for refugees (1.4 million), followed by Somalia (1.1 million).

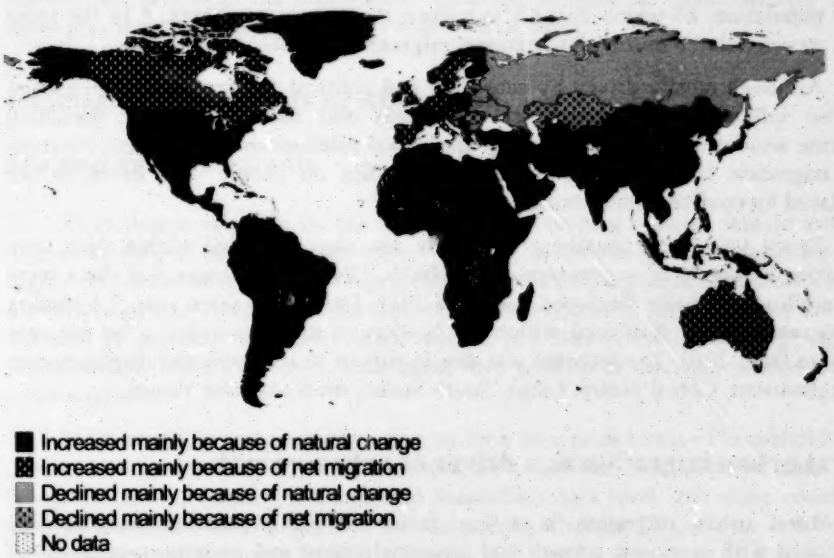
[6] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Global trends 2011: a year of crises" (2012).

[7] UNHCR, "Winter conditions bring new hardship for more than 600,000 Syrian refugees", *UNHCR News Stories*, 11 January 2013.

C. Impact of international migration on population composition and size

18. Between 1990 and 2010, natural increase was the main component of change in population size for the vast majority of the world's countries. Yet net migration, defined as the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants, has become an increasingly important component of overall change in population size for many countries, especially those in the developed regions (see figure II).

Figure II
Change in population size and primary component of change, 1990 to 2010


Increased mainly because of natural change
Increased mainly because of net migration
Declined mainly because of natural change
Declined mainly because of net migration
No data

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision Database.
Note: The boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

19. In Europe, where the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births since the late 1990s, positive net migration has offset population decline. In 2010, the population of Europe was 4 per cent larger than it would have been without migration between 1990 and 2010. In North America and Oceania as well, net migration has contributed significantly to overall population growth. In 2010, the population of North America was 10 per cent larger than it would have been without migration since 1990, while the equivalent figure for Oceania was over 8 per cent.

20. Negative net migration has a limited impact on population size in most developing countries. Nevertheless, it has been a major factor for some small island developing States and other developing countries with small populations, in particular for certain subgroups, such as the highly educated.

III. Internal migration: levels, trends and demographic impacts

A. Levels and trends of internal migration

21. Although the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs produces comparable estimates of the number of international migrants by age, sex and origin for all countries and areas of the world, the development of global estimates of internal migration is still at an early stage. Despite that limitation, available data suggest that a far larger number of people move within their countries than internationally. In 2010, the "floating population" (people who reside in a location other than the one in which they are officially registered) of China alone was estimated to be 221 million, roughly 17 per cent of the country's total population, of which about 150 million were from rural areas.[8] In the same year, an estimated 8 million international migrants originated from China.

22. Although mostly driven by economic and political factors, internal migration is also influenced by environmental changes and natural disasters, including extreme weather events. Nevertheless, the causal relationship between environment and migration is complex, and data and studies on people who move or are displaced by environmental changes are limited.[9]

23. Every year, large numbers of people are also displaced within their own countries by conflicts or persecution. Globally, UNHCR estimates that there were 26.5 million internally displaced people in 2011. During the same year, 3.5 million people were newly displaced within the borders of their countries, a 20 per cent increase from 2010. The increase was due in part to new or renewed displacements in Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen.

B. Rural urban migration as a driver of urban growth

24. Rural urban migration is a key factor of the population redistribution associated wi.h economic growth and industrialization and an important driver of city growth. Yet the relative contribution of such migration as a component of urban growth (versus natural increase) has changed over the course of the past several decades. In the developed countries, in particular in Europe, the bulk (on average two thirds) of urban growth in the 1960s and 1970s resulted from rural urban migration, with the remainder due to natural increase.[10] The situation was reversed for developing countries: about 60 per cent of urban growth was due to natural increase and the remaining 40 per cent to internal migration.

25. Estimates for the 1980s and 1990s indicate that, while natural increase continued to be the main driver of city growth in developing countries, substantial variation was observed over time and space.[11] For example, rural-urban migration

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[8] Kam Wing Chan, "China: internal migration" in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, Immanuel Ness and Peter Bellwood, eds. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

[9] United Kingdom, Government Office for Science, *Foresight: Migration and Global Environmental Change* (London, 2011).

[10] *Patterns of Urban and Rural Population Growth* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XIII.9).

[11] Guy Stecklov, "The components of urban growth in developing countries", paper prepared for the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (2008).

was the most important factor of urban growth in China and Thailand (80 per cent), Rwanda (79 per cent), Indonesia (68 per cent) and Namibia (59 per cent). By contrast, in Latin American and the Caribbean, recent evidence confirms that while rural-urban migration plays a small and declining role in city growth, it continues to have a major impact on rural depopulation.[12]

26. As developing countries in Asia and Africa become more urbanized, the pool of rural inhabitants that feeds rural-urban migration will shrink, making migration a declining factor in urban growth. At the same time, the reduction of fertility in urban areas is putting downward pressure on natural increase, while fertility rates in rural areas remain high in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In Latin America, fertility in urban areas has approached, or has already fallen below, replacement levels. In the near future, therefore, rural-urban migration may once again play a more prominent role in the growth of cities.

IV. Demographic aspects of migration

A. Sex and age of migrants

27. Migration is selective by sex and age. In developing regions, female internal migration tends to be higher than male.[13] Among internal migrants, women are also highly concentrated in the 20-24 age group, whereas men are somewhat more evenly distributed by age. Among international migrants worldwide, approximately half are women: 51 per cent in the developed and 45 per cent in the developing regions. Since women often live longer than men, they tend to be overrepresented among older migrants.

28. Increasingly, women are migrating on their own or as heads of households and principal wage earners for themselves and their families. For instance, data from labour emigration permits in South and South-East Asia show that some countries, such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, allocate 70 per cent or more of such permits to prospective female migrants.

29. Migrants tend to be younger and healthier than their non-migrating counterparts. In a sample of seven European countries, immigrants between 20 and 29 years of age constituted between one third and one half of all immigrants arriving in 2008 and 2009.[14] Persons of working age, between 20 and 64 years old, accounted for 73 per cent of the global stock of international migrants in 2010, compared to less than 57 per cent of world population.

30. Internal migrants are also highly concentrated in the young adult ages. Data from developed countries show a predominance of migration among persons in their late teens or early twenties, for example in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and

[12] United Nations, "Population, territory and sustainable development" (Santiago, 2012).

[13] M. Roig, K. Osaki and J. Singelman, "Internal migration in developing countries: evidence from demographic and health surveys", paper prepared for the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (2008).

[14] United Nations, "International migration in a globalizing world: the role of youth", Technical Paper, No. 2011/1 (New York, 2011).

Northern Ireland and the United States of America, where the migration of young people is often related to the pursuit of higher education.[15]

31. Because international migrants tend to comprise higher proportions of working-age persons compared to the overall population, migration contributes to reducing old age dependency ratios, defined as the number of persons aged 65 and older divided by the number of persons aged 20 to 64, in many countries. Despite this effect, the old-age dependency ratios of developed countries are projected to continue to increase.

32. Similarly, in many developing countries where fertility has fallen rapidly, populations have begun or are beginning to grow older. Those countries, including China and the Republic of Korea, may see immigration as a tool to stem the inevitable rise of old-age dependency ratios. As a result, in the future, Europe and other developed regions might need to compete with emerging economies to attract working-age migrants.

B. Migration, fertility and family formation

33. Besides contributing directly to changes in population size and its composition by age and sex, migration has broader demographic impacts on societies of origin and destination, especially when migrant populations have different levels and patterns of fertility and family formation. In countries of destination, international migration often leads to an increase in the number of births, in part because migrant women are typically concentrated in the reproductive ages. In Europe, North America and Oceania, all net recipients of migrants from other major areas between 1990 and 2010, the number of births was 3, 8 and 5 per cent higher, respectively, than if there had been no migration.

34. Births to migrants comprise an increasing proportion of the total in many host countries. For example, in the United States the share of births to foreign-born mothers grew from 15 per cent in 1990 to 23 per cent in 2010,[16] and in Italy, from around 6 per cent in 2000 to nearly 19 per cent in 2010.[17]

35. Recent studies confirm that in developed countries, immigrant women tend to have higher levels of fertility than native-born women.[18] In the countries of Western, Northern and Southern Europe, which have received unprecedented numbers of immigrants in the past decades, migrant women have a higher average fertility than native-born populations, but this difference typically diminishes over time and with the duration of migrants' stay in a country.

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[15] United Kingdom, Office for National Statistics, "Internal migration by local authorities in England and Wales, year ending June 2011", Statistical Bulletin, 25 September 2012; Raven Molloy, Christopher L. Smith and Abigail Wozniak, "Internal migration in the United States", Finance and Economics Discussion Series Working Paper No. 2011-30 (Washington, D.C., Federal Reserve Board, 2011).

[16] Gretchen Livingston and D'Vera Cohn, "U.S. birth rate falls to a record low; decline is greatest among immigrants" (Washington, D.C., Pew Research Center, 2012).

[17] Italy, National Institute of Statistics (Istat), press release on 2010 demographic indicators, 24 January 2011.

[18] Tomáš Sobotka, "The rising importance of migrants for childbearing in Europe", *Demographic Research*, vol. 19, July 2008.

36. In countries of origin, international migration typically reduces the number of births because of the outflow of persons of reproductive age. In the Caribbean and Polynesia, two regions characterized by high levels of emigration, the number of births would have been 5 and 16 per cent higher, respectively, in the absence of net migration between 1990 and 2010. Returning migrants may also convey new ideas and behaviours related to family formation and fertility preferences.[19]

37. Internal migration patterns, in particular migration from rural to urban areas, are also associated with distinct fertility changes. Fertility levels in urban areas of a country tend to be lower than those in rural areas, and the fertility levels of women who migrate from rural to urban areas tend to be lower than those of women who remain in rural areas. As with international migration, these differences reflect changes in childbearing behaviour due to new norms and revised costs and benefits of childbearing in a different setting, the selectivity of those who migrate and the disruptive effects of migration on childbearing caused by the separation of spouses and the postponement of childbearing.

38. The empirical evidence is as varied as the context of migration. For example, in rural communities of Mozambique with large-scale labour migration of men, women had lower levels of fertility if they were married to migrants than non-migrants, and their lifetime fertility declined the longer their husbands were away.[20] By contrast, a study in Mexico found that a higher level of male migration to the United States was associated with a greater likelihood of giving birth for women in the community of origin.[21]

39. Migration also has important implications for family formation. Family migration is the main category of permanent migration in the developed regions, accounting for up to 45 per cent of international migration flows.[22] Those flows often involve persons who are seeking to reunite with a spouse or partner abroad, who in turn can be either a native-born resident or a migrant. Reunification with children and other family members and intercountry adoptions are also significant contributors to migration in a number of receiving countries.

40. In recent years the prevalence of marriages involving at least one foreign-born person has increased sharply. In Europe, at least 20 per cent of marriages in 2006 and 2007 were international, and the figure approaches 30 per cent for a few countries. International marriages are also widespread in some other major areas and countries. In 2010, marriages to foreigners (the majority to foreign brides) were about 25 per cent of the total in Singapore, 11 per cent in the Republic of Korea and 4 per cent in Japan.[23] Factors driving the increase in the number of marriages to foreign brides in Asia include increasing proportions of native-born women electing to postpone or forgo marriage altogether and imbalances in the age distributions of

[19] Philippe Fargues, "International migration and the demographic transition: a two-way interaction", *International Migration Review*, vol. 45, No. 3 (2011).

[20] Victor Agadjanian, Scott T. Yabiku and Boaventura Cau, "Men's migration and women's fertility in rural Mozambique", *Demography*, vol. 48, No. 3 (August 2011).

[21] David P. Lindstrom and Silvia Giorguli Saucedo, "The interrelationship between fertility, family maintenance and Mexico-U.S. migration", *Demographic Research*, vol. 17, December 2007.

[22] OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2012*.

[23] Giampaolo Lanzieri, "A comparison of recent trends of international marriages and divorces in European countries", paper presented at the seminar of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population on global perspectives on marriage and international migration, Seoul, October 2011.

men and women of marriageable age. An imbalanced sex ratio at birth in some Asian countries, driven by a traditional preference for sons, seems likely to increase the future role of international migration in family formation.

V. Enhancing the benefits of migration

41. International migration presents various opportunities and challenges for countries of both origin and destination. Reaping benefits while averting potential harm requires appropriate policies and programmes.

A. Promoting the integration of international migrants

42. As the number of international migrants continues to rise, destination countries are confronted with the challenge of promoting migrant integration. Racism and xenophobia, fuelled by the global economic crisis, have strained relations between immigrant and native communities in a number of countries. To facilitate migrant integration, many countries have implemented programmes to promote the social and economic integration of immigrants, ensure non-discrimination and facilitate access to citizenship. By 2011, the vast majority of countries in the developed regions and about one half of the 97 developing countries with available data had implemented programmes to facilitate migrant integration.

43. Legal measures to promote migrant integration often focus on granting access to citizenship. While nearly all countries have implemented policies that regulate access to citizenship, as at 2011, 63 countries had restrictive naturalization policies, meaning that access to citizenship (excluding by marriage) was granted only to immigrants who belonged to a select category or who had resided in the host country for 10 years or longer. For example, Malaysia, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia require at least 10 years of residence, whereas Nigeria, Uganda, Qatar and the Central African Republic require at least 15, 20, 25 and 35 years of residence, respectively. In some countries, including Spain and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), the residence requirement varies depending on the immigrant's nationality, and in others, including Yemen, the entitlement is restricted to Muslims or individuals of Arab origin.

44. Family reunification is another important mechanism for ensuring the economic and social integration of migrants. As at 2011, the Governments of 71 per cent of countries with available data had policies in place to maintain or raise the flow of international migrants entering as part of family reunification programmes, whereas 9 per cent sought to lower such inflows by tightening the requirements for admission, introducing language tests and implementing income requirements and other types of restrictions (the remaining 20 per cent had no policy to intervene).

45. Social integration is often best achieved at a young age. Several countries have introduced specific measures to promote the integration of children and youth through school and other venues. In Italy, linguistic and cultural mediators are used to tutor newly arrived foreign pupils and help them be integrated at school. In Japan, special "bridging schools" have been set up to help migrant children learn Japanese and to promote their integration into the host society.

B. Enhancing the positive impact of skilled migration

46. Countries of destination can benefit greatly from the inflow of skilled migrants, especially when their qualifications are recognized and utilized. Skilled migrants play an important role in creating entrepreneurial ventures and promoting innovation, notably in fields related to science and technology. Consequently, attracting talented young migrants has become an important policy goal in many parts of the world.

47. As at 2011, 67 countries had policies to encourage the immigration of highly skilled workers. Globally, the percentage of countries seeking to attract highly skilled migrants increased from 22 per cent in 2005 to 39 per cent in 2011. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of skilled migrants in OECD member countries nearly doubled, while China, India, Germany, Mexico, the Philippines and the United Kingdom were among the countries with the largest numbers of skilled persons living abroad.

48. Countries have adopted different approaches to attract highly skilled migrants. In Canada, employers can recruit highly skilled migrant workers directly under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. In Australia, the Government's migration programme helps to recruit skilled workers on either a temporary or a permanent basis. Since the onset of the global financial crisis, however, several countries have sought to limit the number of highly skilled immigrants.

49. Migrants' skills are often underutilized owing to difficulties in obtaining recognition for qualifications acquired abroad. In the European Union, migrants are more likely than native born persons to see their qualifications underutilized. In particular, foreign born women are twice as likely as their native born counterparts to be working in jobs for which they are overqualified.[24] A number of countries have implemented policies to improve the recognition of qualifications and skills among migrants through bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements. For example, countries of the European Union have agreed to mutually recognize academic and professional qualifications, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is studying the feasibility of a regional skills recognition agreement.

50. While skilled migration benefits countries of destination, the emigration of educated people, often the "best and brightest", can have a negative impact on development in countries of origin. Such negative impacts can be particularly detrimental for countries that already face severe skills shortages and for countries with relatively small populations. In 2010, the sixty-third World Health Assembly adopted a global code of practice, which aims to discourage the active recruitment of health personnel from developing countries facing critical shortages of health workers. The United Kingdom has adopted a voluntary code of practice regulating the international recruitment of health-care professionals, which includes a list of developing countries from which active recruitment is discouraged. Norway has developed a framework on global solidarity, pledging a more responsible approach to the recruitment of health workers from developing countries.

[24] Eurostat, *Migrants in Europe: A Statistical Portrait of the First and Second Generation* (Brussels, European Union, 2011).

C. Promoting migrant circulation and return

51. Schemes that favour the return or circulation of workers, especially those with needed skills, can be beneficial to development in countries of origin. The proportion of countries having policies to encourage the return of their citizens has increased from 51 per cent in 2005 to 63 per cent in 2011. For example, Ecuador and Georgia have recently implemented programmes to promote the reintegration of return migrants.

52. A number of initiatives have also been undertaken to promote the circulation and return of migrant students and researchers. The Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme provides funding for students from Africa to study abroad, provided that those students work in Africa for a minimum of two years after graduation.[25] In China, the Hundred Talents Programme encourages talented young researchers living abroad to return to China on a temporary or permanent basis by offering an attractive working environment.

53. As previous waves of migrants start to age, new approaches with regard to the provision of care and services, including transnational portability of pensions and other benefits, are being explored. Such approaches are particularly relevant for migrants who wish to return to their country of origin. For instance, Morocco, the Philippines and Turkey have concluded bilateral arrangements with host countries to facilitate the repatriation of benefits, such as social security and health entitlements, to countries of origin.

D. Leveraging contributions from diaspora communities

54. Diaspora communities are increasingly recognized for their contributions in promoting economic and social development, channelling resources and transmitting knowledge and values to countries of origin. Although high unemployment has negatively affected the volume of remittances from some of the major senders in Europe (including Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom), migrants have continued to send money home despite the economic crisis of recent years. Officially recorded remittances to developing countries were estimated to have reached $406 billion in 2012, up from $381 billion in 2011, which represents a 6.6 per cent increase.[26]

55. Remittances continue to provide important support to families and an important and steady source of foreign currency in many developing countries. Several innovative policies have been implemented to harness this contribution. As at 2011, 77 developing countries and 37 developed countries had established Government units to deal with matters of interest for their diaspora. Examples of such Government units include the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit of Dominica, the National Secretariat for Migrants of Ecuador, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the Overseas Singaporean Unit and the Migration Development Unit of Zimbabwe. Several Governments have implemented measures, including providing financial incentives, to facilitate investment by their nationals living

[25] Southern African Regional Universities Association, "Building regional higher education capacity through academic mobility", *SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series*, vol. 3, No. 1 (2011).

[26] World Bank, "Remittances to developing countries will surpass $400 billion in 2012", Migration and Development Brief No. 19 (2012).

abroad. Among those, streamlined bureaucratic procedures for investment and providing tax exceptions or breaks were the most common (see table 3).

Table 3
Number of countries with policy measures to attract diaspora investments, by development group, 2011

	Measures to attract investment by diaspora						
	Streamlined bureaucratic procedures for investments	*Tax exceptions or breaks*	*Preferential treatment in providing credit*	*Reduction of tariffs on goods or import duties for diaspora companies*	*Diaspora bonds or mutual fund*	*Preferential treatment in allotment of licences*	*Other*
World	23	19	16	13	11	2	55
Developed regions	1	–	3	1	2	–	15
Developing regions	22	19	13	12	9	2	40

Source: United Nations, *World Population Policies 2011* (forthcoming).

56. A serious obstacle to harnessing the development potential of remittances is the cost of sending money. In the third quarter of 2012, this was on average 7.5 per cent for the 20 largest bilateral remittance corridors and 9 per cent globally. The highest average remittance cost was for sub-Saharan Africa, at 12.4 per cent.[26]

E. Promoting the positive impact of internal migration

57. Since the mid-1990s, a growing proportion of Governments have considered the spatial distribution of their population as unsatisfactory. Related challenges include rapid urbanization, rural depopulation, urban sprawl, increased density, slum dwellings, refugees and internally displaced persons, including environmentally induced displacements.

58. In 2011, only 12 per cent of Governments were satisfied with the spatial distribution of their populations, and a majority (55 per cent) desired a major redistribution of the population within their country. More Governments of developing countries were concerned with the spatial distribution of their populations than those in the developed regions — 64 versus 27 per cent, respectively. The proportion of Governments desiring a major change in the spatial distribution of the population was particularly high among the least developed countries, at 75 per cent. This proportion ranged from zero in North America to 79 per cent in Africa.

59. Among countries with available data in 2011, 79 per cent had policies to lessen rural-urban migration, an increase from 70 per cent in 2005. The proportion of Governments having policies to lower the rate of rural-urban migration was higher in developing (82 per cent) than in developed countries (69 per cent). This proportion increased between 2005 and 2011 for both developed and developing countries and for all major regions except Africa.

60. In 2011, 69 per cent of countries with available data had policies to reduce the inflow of migrants to large urban agglomerations. Similar to the pattern observed

for rural-urban migration, a much greater proportion of developing countries (79 per cent) had policies to lower the rate of migration into urban agglomerations than of developed countries (38 per cent).

F. Women and their families

61. The entry of women into the labour force, combined with a rapidly ageing population, has resulted in an increasing demand for domestic workers and caretakers of the elderly, positions that are often filled by female migrant workers. In the developed regions, females account for nearly 85 per cent of foreign-born persons working for a private household and 74 per cent of those employed in the health or social services sectors.

62. While the work of migrant women may benefit their families, as well as societies of origin and destination, those employed as domestic workers are often subject to exploitation and abuse. In June 2011, the International Labour Conference adopted Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201 on decent work for domestic workers to improve the conditions of such work. The Convention applies to all domestic workers, regardless of their legal status. As at September 2012, the Convention had been ratified by only three countries.

63. The absence of one or both parents can have a severe impact on the development and well-being of those who stay behind in the countries of origin, particularly children. A number of countries of origin have devised programmes to address some of those negative consequences and provide support to children left behind, as well as to their immediate caregivers, who are often elderly relatives. In the Republic of Moldova, for instance, the Government provides a range of social services and cash to vulnerable children whose parents have emigrated. In Sri Lanka, migrant workers registered with the Bureau of Foreign Employment automatically receive a foreign employment insurance policy that offers migrant workers life insurance, disability and repatriation benefits and medical benefits for families left behind. The insurance policy also covers scholarships for children of registered migrants.

G. Protecting irregular migrants

64. Migrants who have entered a country without authorization, have overstayed their residence permit or are working without proper documentation have become an increasing concern to host Governments. In 2011, the Governments of 75 per cent of countries with available data considered irregular migration a major concern. Migrants in an irregular situation are vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination and abuse. Countries have responded to such situations by reforming their immigration laws, promoting the return of irregular migrants and implementing regularization programmes.

65. In Argentina, since 2006 the National Programme for the Standardization of Immigration Documents has regularized the status of approximately 13,000 international migrants from countries outside the Common Market of the South.[27]

[27] The Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) comprises Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Under the same programme, permanent or temporary residence permits were granted to more than 200,000 applicants from the region. In 2011, the Government of Thailand launched a regularization campaign for migrant workers. During the course of one month, more than 1 million migrant workers in an irregular situation were reported to have registered.[28]

66. As a result of recent political, humanitarian and environmental crises, the plight of "stranded migrants" has come to the fore as an emerging policy concern. In 2011, the conflict in Libya triggered an outflow of migrant workers to neighbouring countries, namely Egypt and Tunisia. UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration led a joint operation to evacuate migrants stranded as a result of the Libyan crisis, which, together with air and sea evacuations organized by individual Governments, helped hundreds of thousands of migrant workers return to their homes. In many cases the assistance went beyond safely returning migrants to their countries of origin. In Bangladesh, for instance, migrants who were repatriated from Libya received cash grants from the World Bank to help support them while they look for new employment.

H. Implementing durable solutions for refugees

67. Over the past years, the international community has stepped up its efforts to secure durable solutions for refugees. More than 500,000 refugees were voluntarily repatriated in 2011, more than double the figure for 2010. Thousands of those refugees received support to reintegrate and find jobs in their countries of origin. As for those unable to return to their home countries, efforts continue to promote their integration into host societies or resettlement in a third country.

68. In recent years, significant progress has been made in delivering reproductive health-care and family planning services to refugees living in camps. The United Nations Population Fund, in collaboration with UNHCR, the World Health Organization and other partners, is actively engaged in providing sexual and reproductive health-care services to refugees, in particular to women, in a culturally sensitive manner.

I. Combating the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings

69. Trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants touch nearly all countries of the world. While quantifying the exact magnitude of these transnational crimes is difficult, it is estimated that at least 2.5 million persons were exploited as victims of trafficking in 2005.[29] Nearly 80 per cent of those trafficked are women, 16 per cent of whom are below 18 years of age.[30] Total illicit profits produced by the sexual or labour exploitation of trafficked persons were estimated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) at about $32 billion in 2005.[29] Similar data

[28] Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, "Thailand's low-skilled migration policy: progress and challenges", paper submitted to the Committee on Migrant Workers for the day of general discussion on the rights of migrant workers in an irregular situation and members of their families, Geneva, September 2011.

[29] International Labour Organization, *A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour* (2005).

[30] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* (2009).

for migrant smuggling are difficult to obtain, since migrants can enter more than once while estimates often rely on apprehensions.

70. Between 2003 and 2008, the number of countries with anti-trafficking laws more than doubled.[30] Countries of origin, transit and destination are increasingly working together to prevent trafficking in persons, protect victims and prosecute trafficking offenders. In September 2010, the Secretary-General launched a global plan of action to combat trafficking in persons, which seeks to integrate the fight against human trafficking into United Nations programmes. Coordinated efforts to combat the transnational smuggling of migrants are under way in a number of countries and regions. Considerable progress has also been made in promoting the ratification of relevant multilateral instruments. As at September 2012, 152 countries had ratified the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, while 134 countries had ratified the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the same Convention.

VI. Data on migration and the need to strengthen data production

71. There are serious limitations in the availability and comparability of data on migration. Two fundamental problems are a lack of internationally agreed definitions and the inherent difficulties of surveillance. Unlike other demographic events, such as birth and death, which are singular, well-defined events, migration can occur multiple times over the life course and can change in nature, for instance, from temporary to permanent and vice versa. Moreover, data-collection systems continue to focus on long-term resettlement and thus fail to capture the complexity of today's mobility. Major sources of data on migration include population censuses and registers, administrative records and household surveys.[31]

A. Data on international migration

72. Population censuses are basic systems for collecting demographic and socioeconomic data; they yield the most comprehensive and internationally comparable information on international migration. Typically, censuses include three pertinent migration questions: (a) country of birth; (b) country of citizenship; and (c) year of arrival. Population censuses have the drawback of being carried out at lengthy intervals, generally once per decade. Moreover, the dissemination of results is often slow and lacks sufficient detail for policy formulation.

73. During the 2010 census round, of the 192 countries that had conducted a census by 31 October 2012, 126 countries provided results to the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Of those, 94 countries (75 per cent) included a question on country of birth, 86 countries (68 per cent) on citizenship and 52 countries (41 per cent) on year of arrival. Considering that at

[31] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Data and analysis: partnering to better understand and address the human development implications of migration", paper presented at the Global Migration Group Practitioners Symposium, Geneva, May 2010.

present most countries carry out a population and housing census that includes at least the basic questions on migration, there is a potential for the expanded use of such data if international recommendations and standards are appropriately and widely adopted.

74. Administrative data derive from a variety of recording systems, usually aimed at controlling international migration. Examples include visas, work permits, residence permits and regularization systems. While potentially rich in information, statistics produced from administrative sources tend to lack comparability owing to differences in concepts and reporting systems. Examples of good practices in using administrative data for migration policy analysis include the production of refugee statistics by UNHCR based on asylum applications and refugee status determination and the use of residence permit data by OECD countries. The main challenges in using such data are linked to difficulties in obtaining records from the responsible institutions and the lack of capacity of statistical offices in compiling and disseminating such information, especially in some developing countries.

75. Household surveys are important for the collection of in-depth information on international migration, in particular for assessing the impact of migration on development. Yet migrant surveys are costly and require large sample sizes, as international migration is a rare event to which few people are exposed. Another challenge is ensuring that migrants are surveyed along with non-migrants to enable meaningful comparisons. A third challenge is the ad hoc nature of specialized surveys, making them difficult to compare over time. To examine changes in patterns and the characteristics of migration and its impact on development, a dedicated survey programme for carrying out standardized migration surveys on a periodic basis could be established in national statistical offices.

B. Data on internal migration

76. There are inherent difficulties in obtaining internationally comparable data on internal migration, mainly because of the diversity of geographical scales across which moves can be and are recorded. The two main sources of data on internal migration are population and housing censuses and household surveys. While information on the number and percentage of persons within the national territory who are living in a region different from where they lived five years ago ("five-year migrants") or from where they were born ("lifetime migrants") is increasingly available,[32] its comparability could be improved by harmonizing data-collection standards, including the temporal and spatial frameworks used to capture migration. A more systematic collection of data on lifetime and five-year migration in censuses and surveys could contribute to a better understanding of patterns and trends in internal migration and of its impact on the spatial redistribution of population and on development.

[32] Bell and Charles-Edwards, "Cross-national comparisons of internal migration: an update of global patterns and trends".

VII. Conclusion and recommendations

77. **Migrants are a diverse group comprising women and men of different ages with a variety of migratory histories and legal statuses. Successful policies for migration and development will need to consider such diversity of experience and vulnerability, as well as the impact of migration on places of origin and destination and on families separated by migration.**

78. **Migrants whose rights are well protected are able to live with dignity and security and to contribute to their host and origin societies both economically and socially. Migrants in an irregular situation, especially women, children and youth, are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Care should be taken to ensure that all persons in need of protection, including refugees, are identified and assisted, especially within mixed migratory flows. States should protect the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their legal status, including by ratifying the various legal instruments pertaining to international migration.**

79. **A majority of migrants are labour migrants. Policies should seek to maximize migration's contribution to human development, recognizing that the protection of migrant rights, including labour protections, is necessary for the realization of the full potential of migration for social and economic development. In this regard, Governments should reduce the negative impact of migration by improving access to regular migratory channels and combating all abusive forms of migration, including migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Migration policies should be aligned with the labour market needs of both sending and receiving nations, minimizing the negative impact due to the loss of human capital and the separation of families.**

80. **Shortcomings of policymaking are often linked to a lack of timely and comparable data, which should include adequate disaggregation by age, sex, geographical location and other characteristics. Effective policymaking requires data on migratory stocks and flows, legal statuses, sectoral and occupational distributions, social protections coverage, working conditions and wages, safety and health conditions and educational attainment. The Commission may wish to consider how the international statistical community can better support Governments in producing and analysing migration data for evidence-based policymaking, guided by internationally agreed standards and recommendations and in accordance with international principles of privacy and data protection.**

81. **In considering policy options related to internal migration, Governments may need to balance their concerns about competing issues. The possible negative impact of the excessive concentration of populations in cities or metropolitan areas should be weighed, for example, against the benefits of mobility to persons who move in pursuit of education and employment or in the interest of family unity.**

82. **If governed fairly, migration can help to foster inclusive social and economic development and is an important element of a renewed global partnership for development. Migration can contribute to the human development of migrants and their families by expanding access to decent work, education and health. Its contributions can be enhanced by lowering the costs of migration, ensuring equal treatment with nationals, encouraging the**

transnational portability of pensions and other social benefits and promoting the mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications.

83. **In the process of defining the post-2015 development agenda, a broad discussion on the important linkages between migration and development has already begun. Migration will need to be fully integrated into this new agenda, with special attention to the most vulnerable and with the important contributions of migrants to development taken into account.**